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Screens Found to Block Rays at Moscow Embassy

Associated Press

A classified State Department document says that aluminum screening recently installed at the U.S. embassy in Moscow is 90 per cent effective in blocking out microwave radiation being beamed at the embassy by the Soviets.

The document, prepared for use in closed briefings of embassy employees, provides the first detailed official explanation of the microwave situation, which has aroused concern over potential health hazards because of the radiation.

Yet many basic questions remain unanswered — including why the Soviets are continuing the microwave bombardment.

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger has called the issue "a matter of great delicacy which has many ramifications," adding that the United States is involved in talks with Soviet officials in an effort to get the radiation stopped.

A copy of the confidential State Department briefing paper was made available to the Associated Press.

The document says that window screens installed at the embassy 2½ months ago "reduce the current microwave signals to a point well below one microwatt per square centimeter but not to a 'zero' level."

By contrast, late last year the microwaves had reached a maximum intensity of 18 microwatts in certainly heavily irradiated areas of

the embassy, the briefing paper said.

U.S. officials in Washington and Moscow have refused to give any detailed public explanation about the microwave problem since it broke into headlines in early February.

On the purpose of the microwaves, the briefing paper said, "This is something the Soviets are in the best position to answer."

The Soviets, the document noted, "have suggested to some newsmen recently that they are attempting to interfere with embassy reception of communications. Others have theorized that the beams were in some way connected with surveillance activities."

On the question of possible health hazards, the paper said that so far "no cause and effect relationship has been established between disorders contracted by those in Moscow and their exposure to the electromagnetic field."

It noted that "a full-scale study of those who have served in Moscow in the past and those who are there now is in the process of being developed."

The briefing document also reported that since October, 1975, the embassy has been the target of two microwave beams. "Both are highly directional, somewhat like searchlight beams, but wider. They are aimed at the upper floors of the central wing of the chancery

from different directions," the document said.

The upper floors of the 10-story building house the offices of the ambassador and other top diplomats, along with sensitive communications and intelligence areas.

The State Department account said the two microwave beams "are sometimes on the air simultaneously for three to four hours a day."